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We Will Tell All About Raid, Says Cuban Exile Group

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By AL BURT
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The Revolutionary Recovery Movement (MRR) promised Thursday that its leader, Manuel Artime, will clarify questions that have arisen by the exile organization raid on a Cuban sugar mill.

An MRR spokesman said that Artime will give details soon, and might have pictures as proof.



ARTIME

At the same time, it was revealed that Artime himself did not participate in the raid and that there had been a misunderstanding about what time it began.

MRR had announced Wednesday that its forces — including guerrillas from the mountains, and combat engineers, commandos, a communications team and frogmen off boats — made a predawn precision attack on the Cabo Cruz sugar mill at Puerto

Pilon in south Oriente Province.

Cuban Premier Fidel Castro confirmed the attack, but said it consisted of a boat shelling the sugar mill warehouses from the sea and setting fire to some 70,000 bags of sugar.

No doubt existed that a daring hit-run attack had been made, but questions have begun to arise about the extravagance of some of the claims being made about details of the raid.

The MRR spokesman said that in translating the official war communique from Spanish to English, the time was changed. The raid actually began at 3:50 a.m. greenwich mean time (10:50 Tuesday night Miami time), but it was translated to 3:50 a.m., he said.

According to the 3:50 a.m. time first announced, MRR's claims of a three-hour battle would have meant the raiding party did not withdraw until well after dawn. In daylight, it is probable that Castro's air force, which includes MIG jets, would have spotted such a party.

The spokesman said that

Artime would also make other details clear.

Among questions unanswered are:

IN THREE HOURS of "tenacious fighting," during which many Castro militia were reported wounded or injured, how was it possible that MRR forces escaped without casualties? (The local spokesman said perhaps there had been MRR casualties).

HOW, considering the admittedly extensive and sophisticated defense system which Cuba has, could such an attack have been carried on for three hours without normal air force or naval patrols responding?

WHY, if guerrillas, from the mountains participated, did an official announcement draw attention to this fact, since it could only result in attracting attention to them and inevitable retaliation measures?

WHY, on a serious military mission, would time be spent planting a bronze inscribed plaque at the sugar mill — surrounded by explosives to prevent its removal — as one MRR spokesman claimed?

spokesman claimed? (A local MRR man agreed such an act would have been "inconceivable").

WHY was it not clear in the announcement whether Artime, the MRR's respected chief, participated?

MRR spokesmen said Artime would clear up these items.

Meanwhile, in Washington, officials answered Castro charges that the U.S. was behind it all with a categorical denial. State Department Press Officer Robert J. McCloskey said he was authorized to deny that any U.S. agency, including the Central Intelligence Agency, was involved or had supported the raid in any way.

Castro's claim that "a pirate-ship of the Rex-type" belonging to the CIA made the attack seemed to be pure speculation. The Rex, a ship that had been accused of such operations last fall, was in the Port of Palm Beach and had been for the past three weeks.